



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NEPAL

FIRST PERSON

Youth Clubs Promote Reconciliation

Young people have place to learn new skills and join productive activities



Photo: USAID/Nepal/James Ellis

Rabeeta Chaudhary, as president of the local village youth club in Sutaiya, Nepal, organizes projects and helps mediate disputes for her community.

“Youth are the potential energy of the country. When we organize, we can do something special,” said Rabeeta Chaudhary, president of the village youth club in Sutaiya, Nepal.

Nepal is emerging from a 12-year conflict that disproportionately affected youth, leaving many communities deprived of youth leaders and with few opportunities for positive activities and dialogue.

Rabeeta Chaudhary joined the village youth club in her hometown of Sutaiya because she saw it as a way to contribute. Now she is the club's president, and leads an important movement for peace and reconciliation in her community.

The 20-year-old leader is from a traditional, rural area of the restive Terai region in southern Nepal. Poverty here is widespread and Rabeeta's peers were affected by the protracted conflict at both the national and regional levels. Villages often saw their youth leave to escape the conflict and a lack of opportunity. Communities needed ways to involve youth in productive activities and peaceful decision-making processes.

USAID is supporting groups such as Rabeeta's to engage youth in peace and reconciliation by organizing activities that develop new skills, promote self-confidence and offer creative alternatives to conflict. Through the groups, youth across five districts in southern Nepal have organized sports and cultural events for their communities, providing a non-threatening forum for youth from different areas to interact. The groups also plan and carry out valuable community service projects, including planting trees, improving roads and assisting in dispute resolution on a volunteer and community-driven basis.

Rabeeta said she recognized that while an individual could have only a limited impact, a group could organize and do something larger and more meaningful for the community. She pointed out that she sees the importance of the youth club's efforts every day when she passes by the prominent meeting hall the club built for the village. Rabeeta feels that the club has given the youth a platform for youth to show their talents and capabilities, helping to define a new role for youth as the country emerges from conflict.